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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2009

In Today's Papers

Political Turmoil in Ankara Over Kurdish Initiative  
All papers and TV Channels: Today's papers report that the AKP government's Kurdish initiative created heated debates between the government and the opposition parties. Mainstream Sabah reports that last week the NSC released a supporting statement to government's efforts to solve the Kurdish issue. The opposition party MHP leader Devlet Bahceli strongly denounced the NSC statement. Conservative-nationalist Turkiye reports that AKP deputy Bekir Bozdag responded to Bahceli's criticism, who had described the democratic move as disloyalty, and said "Desiring to put an end to the ongoing bloodshed cannot be called disloyalty." Bozdag also said the signatures of Bulent Ecevit, Devlet Bahceli and Mesud Yilmaz, leaders of three party coalition government then, had saved PKK leader Ocalan from execution. Bozdag also noted that the MHP was betraying Turkish interests by supporting fighting which would lead to more deaths of Turkish soldiers. MHP officials responded to AKP criticism by saying that Bozdag was nobody, not worth answering since he did not have the capacity to understand MHP. Liberal Radikal reports that at a press conference in his party headquarters, CHP leader Deniz Baykal said that the Kurdish move of the government was a dangerous project and Turkey would be like Lebanon, Yugoslavia or Iraq, at the end of this process. Baykal added that the claims to the effect that the Kurdish initiative is a US project are accurate and the Prime Minister has been trying to put an end to these claims by scolding the opposition. NTV reported that speaking to Roj TV, DTP chairman Ahmet Turk said that he believes in the sincerity of PM Erdogan regarding the Kurdish initiative. He said that the issue is not the problem of the Kurd but the problem of the whole of Turkey and criticized the attitude of MHP and CHP.

Phillips: Kurdish Initiative Erdogan's Own Idea (Hurriyet)  
Mainstream Hurriyet says David L. Phillips, the author of reports cited by MHP's Oktay Vural to prove that the AKP government's Kurdish initiative was "an American project," has sent a letter to daily Hurriyet, saying the initiative was PM Erdogan's own idea. Phillips acknowledged he penned two reports for the National Committee for American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) and the Atlantic Council (ACUS) on the PKK, Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds, but stressed

that neither Americans, nor the Turkish officials tried to influence the reports. Phillips stressed that the Kurdish initiative was Erdogan's own idea. "He wouldn't take my advice -- Erdogan's idea is built totally on Turkey's national interests. The AKP's Kurdish initiative is a change of system which will render Turkey secure, free and integrated with Western institutions. Erdogan, with his vision and leadership, deserves credit," emphasized Phillips.

**U.S. Embassy: The Kurdish Issue Is Turkey's Internal Issue**  
Papers report that when the U.S. Embassy was asked by ANKA news agency about claims the Kurdish opening launched by the AKP government was an "American project," the Embassy responded by saying, "We support the democratization of Turkey, but this plan is a Turkish plan," and, "The Kurdish issue is an internal issue for Turkey to resolve." Two weeks ago, Ambassador Jeffrey told Utku Cakirozer of Aksam, "This is clearly a Turkish plan. We have our own views as I said. We have over the years provided these views to Turkey, but this is not something that is made in the United States, this is something that is made in Turkey. It's the Turkish Government that is in charge of this, I have no idea what the details are just like you. I'm waiting for the specifics to come out."

#### Editorial Debate on Kurdish Initiative

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "It is an absolute disrespect to Turkey's self confidence as well as to its internal dynamics to say that foreign hands have devised this important effort. Turkey should have been overcome this complex by now. There are plenty of factors which have led the government to work on an

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action plan for the Kurdish initiative. It is interesting to see, on the other hand, there are some in Turkey who still prefer to explain this initiative as only the result of foreign pressure. "

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "For the first time in this country's history the settlement process for an important problem, i.e. the Kurdish issue, has moved to a democratic platform. This initiative is an effort to embrace differences in a unified democracy by using dialogue, consensus and reconciliation. All of this will lead to a more free Turkey."

Rusen Cakir wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Given the current harsh tone on debates between political parties, there is a potential danger to face with a deadlock in the Kurdish initiative process. The government should be very careful not to mount the already high tension and do its best to include CHP as well as MHP in this process. Any mismanagement of this crisis will ruin the entire effort otherwise."

#### PKK Leader Duran Kalkan Demands an End to Turkish Military Operations

Mainstream dailies Milliyet and Sabah report that one of the PKK leaders Duran Kalkan reminded Turkey that the PKK's unilateral ceasefire expires on September 1. Kalkan said, "If Turkey's military operations do not end, the PKK will launch new attacks after this date."

#### 'Friends of Pakistan' Gather in Istanbul

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the "Friends of Democratic Pakistan" meeting started in Istanbul on August 24. Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, will join the meeting which is hosted by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Islamist-oriented Zaman says the meeting focuses on the fight against terror, moves for stability, and steps for assisting Pakistan in education, health, energy, economy and local administration. Cumhuriyet says the Istanbul meeting will also prepare for another Pakistan gathering to be held in New York on September 24, with the participation of President Obama.

#### "The U.S. Tested A Ballistic Missile" (Cumhuriyet )

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the U.S. Air Force tested a ballistic intercontinental missile "after North Korea and Russia performed similar missile tests." The paper also notes, "The U.S. Air Force announced the successful launch of 'Minuteman 3' missile

from a base in California. Russia did a similar test yet unsuccessfully. North Korea meanwhile was criticized by the UN and many countries for causing security threats due to such ballistic missile tests."

Admiral Mullen: "Al-Qaeda still have the Power to Attack U.S."  
(Milliyet)

Mainstream dailies Milliyet and Sabah report that in an interview with CNN International, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen expressed deep concern over the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Sabah headlines, "The Situation in Afghanistan is Deteriorating" and reports that Admiral Mullen voiced deep concern regarding Taliban activities in Afghanistan. Mullen said "The Taliban insurgency has become more sophisticated and their biggest aim is to kill more U.S. troops." Milliyet notes that Mullen was concerned that even eight years after the September 11 attacks, the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization still has enough power to attack the U.S. and he added that this is Al-Qaeda's biggest aim.

Obama Limits the Power of the CIA (Sabah)

Papers carry a Washington Post (WP) report which says President Obama has approved a new elite team to question key terror suspects, and signed off last week on the unit, named the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG). The HIG will be overseen by the National Security Council, giving the White House direct oversight. Under new guidelines, interrogators will abide by the Army Field Manual when questioning suspects, which means certain techniques such as

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playing loud music or depriving prisoners of sleep, will not be allowed. Members of the new interrogation unit will have the authority to travel around the world to talk to suspects and will be trained to handle certain high-interest people, such as al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, Turkish papers cite WP.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Nine PKK defectors who surrendered to Turkish officials at Habur border crossing were released by the prosecutor in Diyarbakir, benefiting from the 'Repentance Law.'

- The Council of Ministers has discussed Monday a judicial reform bill, which is a critical part of the EU process.

- On Tuesday evening, President Abdullah Gul will host a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner for the relatives of martyred soldiers.

- Chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis and minority representatives will come together tonight at a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner in Istanbul.

- Experts say cuts in interest rates for housing loans continue, and add that it was the right time to buy a new house.

World

- Thousands flee their homes as blazes sweep through forests and burn down houses near Athens. PM Erdogan phoned Greek PM Karamanlis, and told him that Turkey was ready to extend any kind of assistance to fight against ongoing wildfires.

- Hamid Karzai is reelected President in Afghanistan, winning 68 percent of the vote in last week's elections, says Afghan Finance Minister.

- Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Chistofias says they will have to say "no" to Turkey's EU entry if Turkey doesn't change its Cyprus stance.

- Twenty people are killed and 10 wounded in two roadside bombs in Iraq.

- Russia says Ukrainian troops and volunteers fought for Georgia in its war with Russia last year.

- The Gaza government has decided to impose Islamic clothing on female students at Gaza Strip governmental schools.

JEFFREY